13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

in point, the only one I really came across. A man in his thirties, he was reputed to be a wanderer, travelling incessantly over the Nilgiri downs without any home at which to stay. He was not known to have any attachments at all, let alone feminine ones, and the explanation for this which I obtained from Kanvarsathi was illuminating. Pangur was supposed to have been excessively repressed in childhood, so that he had never got over the habit of masturbation. Again, I was struck by the very orthodox psychoanalytical nature of this interpretation coming from a people who have no notions of the modern development of psychology in the West. It was as if their lack of prudery in sexual matters coupled with a primitive commonsense were sufficient to make them understand these things much better than anyone in our societies would.

Both the Todas and the local Indian medical practitioners whom I interrogated on this question, said that they had never heard of or seen any case of insanity in the tribe. And this in spite of syphilis being (or having been until lately) rampant among them, although, it seems obvious, only in a mild form which does not bring about nervous disorders such as with us.

Suicide, on the other hand, was far from unknown, and numerous instances could be cited. Formerly, the recognized method of doing away with oneself was, as Rivers has recorded it (see *The Todas*, p. 555): hanging with a *kakhudri* (Dregea volubilis, Benth) creeper. This because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said to have killed himself in this way, after his master had been carried away by the goddess Terkosh (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 201). Nowadays, however, opium has taken the place of this more antiquated method, a habit which, it is considered, has been adopted from the Badagas. Sriar's father, Izcheidi (20), thus committed suicide by taking the drug, because his wife had been carried away from him. because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said have ended her life by taking opium after the death of her son.

Concerning crime, Rivers says: "It is, however, doubtful whether crime can be said to exist among the Todas," (*The Todas*, pp. 553–4). Certainly the tribe appears to be made up of remarkably meek and peaceful individuals, they having no arms at all, a rare occurrence among any human beings on earth. Nor is there any indication that they ever had any. From questioning I gathered that Todas often quarrel, shouting and even beating each other with the very attractive walking-sticks which it is their speciality to manufacture. But nothing

[Melgarsh Village]

them to do this they would a) continue when adult, b) spoil their health by doing so. The method for overcoming the "evil" is to administer *tworkh* on the genitals, as on the buttocks for insanitary lapses. (Incidentally Ersigwuf admitted that she also made use of these nettles on the mouths of her children when they bit her, and on their fingers, when they pinched her and pulled her hair.) Masturbation, as a result, is less intensive, but does, all the same, continue, she said, until the fourth year. Then there is a period of calm (latency?) until the twelfth year.

My interpreter here put in his own version. He said that Erzigwuf was not telling the truth, and that he had observed other things with his own children. They carried on with masturbation until the ninth year inclusive, and what was apparently latency, thus lasted for only three years. He also mentioned that in his day the punishments employed were much more drastic. A horrible one that he remembers consisted of having the wrists tied behind the back, the cloak fastened tightly over arms and legs and to be put, thus trussed up, at the entrance to the buffalo pen when the animals rushed out either in the morning or in the evening. It was here that Kanvarsathi told me that Pangur, the adult son of the Teivilkh chieftain Piliar of Kuur *mad*, had never really given up masturbating because, in his opinion, he had been too repressed in his activity as a child and had thus never grown out of the habit.

Premarital relations between young people after puberty are not discouraged with the Todas, provided they take place within the permissibe marital rules of the tribe, i.e. outside the *polkhliol* and *modol*, but within the moiety. Thus, premarital relations with a *matchuni* are considered quite normal, and should a child result from them, there is no harm done, as, officially, they are not premarital realations at all, but those of a wedded couple, even if the marriage took place in very early childhood.

I asked Erzigwuf if Pershrörsh, the eldest boy, who had attained the age of puberty, had any relations with girls, and her answer was that he probably had, as he was most of the time away from Melgarsh and she could not get him to stay, although she had asked him to, since Mutnarsh was very busy in the Botanical Gardens. Narjilkh, she said, was too young for such things, and Pengelam also, although the latter, a girl, would be watched more as she grew older.

Three days after the family had entered the *puzharsh*, I went to see them come out and return to the *mad*. I noticed that of the two newborn twins, the boy looked very sick, while the girl was strong and healthy. In order to keep the little one alive, and because Erzigwuf was